

HOW AGRICULTURAL TRENDS MAY AFFECT THE FARM LABOR SITUATION *

by

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Having had the privilege of once working with you in the formulation and administration of a national farm labor program to meet the manpower emergencies which faced our farmers during the recent world war, it is a real pleasure to again attempt to set forth some personal views concerning the same program, but under peacetime conditions. I cannot minimize the importance of the viewpoints that result from these two eras. In fact, so that there will be no mistaking my biases in what I will have to say, let me remind you that on this occasion I speak as a rural sociologist, assigned to a land grant college.

My change in roles brings about a concomitant change in viewpoints. The compulsory framework of national defense and the supreme necessity of military success, focused my thoughts and actions toward the end-product of a national farm labor program. This end-product was maximum food and fibre production at all costs. You and I — all of us in the program — were primarily concerned with the size of the food and fibre stock pile that we were charged to build. Now I am free to be equally as concerned with the operations which produce the food as in the end products themselves. You who remain in the program may not at first thought share this change of feeling in emphasis, but I hope that I will be able to convince you that, to a large degree, you, too, have this same prerogative. Yes, that you too, are under the same necessity of some change in viewpoints.

When we look backward over the years of war, it is gratifying to see how closely the farm labor program, as conceived and administered, met the changing farm manpower needs as they arose with each significant forward movement of an all-out war effort. True, no medals nor citations have been heaped on you, but that should not in any way detract from the personal conviction which I feel each of you has, that you served faithfully and took every hill that strategy dictated needed to be stormed in achieving victory over food and fibre deficits. The American farmer went through the war consistently producing "more milk, more meat, more poultry, more eggs, more soy beans, more peanuts, more beans and peas — in short, more food —" to keep up with the increasing food needs from year to year as the battle fronts expanded and the liberated hungry population increased.

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The record wartime food productions are "a tribute to American farmers and farm workers and to those public officials who were responsible for recruiting, routing, and placing workers in the gaps where they were needed most." 1/

The war has been won -- peace is ahead. We are here to lay plans for a peacetime farm labor service and you have asked me to discuss "how agricultural trends may affect the farm labor situation." I did not think you wished me to confine my analysis to agricultural trends only, because there are other trends that will have to be considered; in fact, I would like to commence with a general trend.

Of basic importance to an integrated farm labor policy is the possibility of this Nation achieving a peacetime full employment program. Contrasting the debacle of unemployed of the 1930's with the full employment years of the war, some sociologists would look on our ability to achieve a continuation of full employment in peacetime as the real test of our basic national policies. 2/ I have to share their view, and this therefore is the first place where the end products of employment commence to lost their all-inclusive importance.

With the approaching end of the war there was a generally growing fear of a sizable post-war unemployed force. As early as November and December of 1944, (the time of the Battle of the Bulge) the Bureau of the Budget and some members of Congress were contemplating wholesale lay-offs and unemployment in industry, which would obviate the need of continuing federally-sponsored labor recruitment programs. VE and VJ days were expected to reverse the manpower situation from one of scarcity to one of abundance.

It was argued by some of us that at the war's end, and not until then, would the Nation witness lay-offs, but these lay-offs would not necessarily increase the ranks of the unemployed. Neither could they be counted on to any great extent as building up a potential employment reservoir, unless

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1. Glen T. Barton and Martin R. Cooper, Farm Production in War and Peace, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., December 1945, p. 49.
 2. Margaret Jarman Hagood and Louis J. Ducoff, "Some Measurement and Research Problems Arising from Sociological Aspects of a Full Employment Policy," American Sociological Review, Vol. II, No. 5, October 1946, pp. 560-67.

a national calamity comparable to the force of war would develop. ^{3/}
We knew that large redistributions of population would occur, but that
"after the temporary maladjustment of population incident to all wars is
overcome" the American farmer would find himself recruiting in a short
labor market. ^{4/}

With cessation of actual warfare, we no longer have to speculate
on the size of employment levels, because we can review actual post-war
employment trends.

Looking at the facts from their vantage-ground, the Bureau of Labor
Statistics has just said:

"Reconversion of the Nation's labor force was virtually completed
by the end of the first year of peace. During the 1-year period
following VJ-day, more than 10 million servicemen were demobilized
and absorbed into civilian pursuits. In addition, approximately
4.5 million extra wartime workers, principally women and teen-age
youth, left the labor market to resume their peacetime activities
at home and in school. Many more millions of workers shifted over
from war to civilian production. Yet, at no time during this
period was unemployment a critical problem, and the year ended
with employment at record levels." ^{5/}

It will be helpful to examine in some detail the manner in which the
man-power reconversion was accomplished during the first year of peace, be-
cause there unquestionably are some permanent population movements involved
which in turn have a significant bearing upon the future farm labor poten-
tials. The flexibility of our total labor force was demonstrated by the
addition of approximately 8 million persons who in normal peacetime would
not expect to be counted in the labor force. This group was made up largely
of school children, women and older men. Between April 1945 — the last
month of the two-front war — and August 1946, 5.6 million of the 8 million
extra workers had left the labor force. The Bureau of Labor Statistics
divides the 5.6 million extra workers into the following categories: ^{6/}

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3. Hearings on Public Law 229, 78th Congress.
 4. George W. Hill, "Wartime and Postwar Farm Labor in the West," Proceedings,
The Western Farm Economics Association, 1944.
 5. "The Labor Force in the First Year of Peace," Monthly Labor Review, Bureau
of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, Vol. 63, No. 5,
November 1946, p. 669.
 6. Ibid, p. 676

	(millions)
Women aged 20-34 years	1.5
Women aged 35 years and over	1.4
School-age group (boys and girls and men aged 20-24)	2.6
Men aged 25 years and over1

It is to be expected that the young women who quit their jobs to return to housekeeping or to marry veterans, will be a permanent loss to the labor market. The same will be true of the older women, unless acute shortages will again cause unusually attractive wages and working conditions to be used to entice them into the labor force, of which they normally form a very small part. With the return of veterans, the teen-agers have found that their services likewise no longer bring the premium job offers which they received during the war.

With 13 million veterans a part of the civilian population within one year after VJ day, the absorption of more than 10 million of them into the peacetime labor force in the same period, constitutes a reconversion job without parallel. This absorption of veterans gave the civilian labor force a net expansion of 5.5 million persons during the past year, notwithstanding the withdrawal of the 5.6 million extra workers. The expansion made a total of 40 million employees in all non-agricultural establishments in August 1946, or almost 2 million more than a year earlier, and less than half a million under the peak of 40.4 million in August 1943. The total employed civilian labor force of the Nation in 1946 was 58 million including agriculture, the self employed, proprietors, and domestics. ^{7/}

Looking at the picture as a whole, therefore, the Bureau of Labor Statistics concludes that the past year closed with the labor market resembling the tight wartime market in many respects. "It was hard to recruit workers for highly skilled jobs, for relatively low-paying jobs, or for jobs requiring unpleasant or heavy physical work." ^{8/}

There are two major implications from this full employment policy for our agricultural labor program. First, full employment in industry means purchasing power and healthful food consuming patterns for the bulk of the Nation's population. Second, only marginal workers from the urban labor market can be

7. "The Labor Force in the First Year of Peace," Monthly Labor Review, Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, Vol. 63, No. 5, November 1946, Table 1, p. 670.

8. Ibid., p. 676.

counted on to supplement the seasonal agricultural labor force -- marginal in terms of work experience, and/or desire for agricultural work.

The city employment reservoir will consist mainly of veterans, some of them unemployed, on temporary vacation or in school, and non-veteran high school and college youth. The response of this group from a patriotic motive during the war brought all of these into the labor force. Whether they will respond to appeals for temporary farm work during the summer months will depend, to a large extent, on the working conditions which will prevail. It is my opinion therefore that only so far as you who are charged with carrying out the program can convince farmers to create more favorable work opportunities, will this group be a part of the labor force.

From an international point of view, the need for food production in this country has not diminished from that of the war years. Surely the projected objectives of the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations leave no doubt as to the need for increased exports. Whether or not these objectives can be achieved rests upon the success of our government in effecting the necessary foreign trade agreements.

Undoubtedly the high food potentials which are created by a full employment policy within the Nation and by the need of helping underwrite nutritional standards of other nations are somewhat responsible for the setting of 1947 production goals on a level approximating the peak production of 1946.

As always, the question that the announcement of the goals raised, is, "What are the prospects for farm labor for 1947?" Before we attempt to answer this question, however, I think we should review certain other factors.

The farm plant or organization of 1947 is little more like the farm plant of 1940 than it is of 1930 or 1920. The record-breaking volume production of the war years was the result of three major forces; first, improvement in technological folkways that had been in the making since the first World War, second, the sociopsychological effects of the first continued genuine farm labor shortage in history, which started with the first full war year 1942, and third, the doubling of the prices received by farmers for their products.

The first and third of these forces are ably discussed by Dr. Sherman E. Johnson, and I would only like to repeat what he has to say regarding the future impact of these forces:

"The forces that shaped the course of agricultural production in the interwar and war years are evident in the record-breaking volume during the war. Most of these forces still have unexpended power, and they will continue to influence production in the years beyond the immediate transition from war to peace. New forces will be injected. Some of them are already on the horizon. Others cannot be foreseen, but they should be expected. And farmers will need to adopt their operations to the rapidly changing conditions." 9/

9. Sherman E. Johnson, Changes in Farming in War and Peace, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, June 1946, p. 43.

The second factor merits additional analysis. The trend in farm employment during the entire course of the war was downward, which was a continuation of a long-time movement. During the five-year period 1940-45, total farm employment dropped 741,000 or 7 percent. The hired worker total decreased 17.4 percent over the five years, and the family worker category (including operators) shrank 3.6 percent.

The historical proportion of hired workers to the total, namely one-fourth, dropped to one-fifth by 1945. However, the data for 1946, indicate that the hired worker group may return to its prewar proportion. During the last half of the year the proportion of hired workers has ranged from 23 to 25 percent of the total.

With labor scarce and difficult to obtain, with food production both urgent and profitable, the American farmer was for the first time cognizant of the importance of the social psychological processes of labor relations. With the adjusted farm wage rate index jumping from 118 as the annual average during the five year period 1935-39 to 378 by July 1, 1946,¹⁰ farm employer-farm employee relations took on a new significance. The farmer learned quickly that he could adjust to labor costs, even though they were high, if he stepped up labor efficiency.

One of the components of labor efficiency which received considerable attention during the war years was that of job simplification. Much more is encompassed by this factor, however, than only job simplification. I refer to the complex personal and social interaction pattern developed between the employer and the employee.

The traditional relationship between the farm employer and worker, except where the "hired man" was a long-time regular employee, has been a very impersonal one. Little interest has been taken by the employer in the worker as a personality whose physical well being, personal needs and social needs demanded consideration. Labor had always been plentiful so there had never been the need of full-scale efficient planning of the worker's role. With the loss of family help and the regular run of seasonal workers who had always pulled him through the seasonal peak periods, the farmer was forced to slowly change his attitudes toward his war-time help. He adopted many of the accepted principles of employer-employee relations which are characteristic of modern industry.

The progress made in labor efficiency brought about through a change in employer-employee relations, the elimination of the traditional wasteful extravagance of large numbers of underemployed in agriculture, and the increased productivity per worker are all factors that have a bearing on total production regardless of where the immediate goals may be set. Forces have been put into operation that cannot be easily stopped, nor do we wish to have them reversed. I offer this newly evolved pattern as a socio-psychological force that, to use Sherman Johnson's words, will "point irreversibly in the direction of increased

10. Farm Labor, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, United States Department of Agriculture, September 12, 1946, p. 5.

production.....there is no road back from the agricultural revolution that has been experienced during the interwar period and World War II." 11/

This stepped-up tempo of modern farming presents an aspect of the operations of a peacetime farm labor program that will merit as much attention in the ensuing years as the end product of the program itself. A change in the personality of the farmer has taken place concurrently with the increased efficiency of his farm organization. Having had the past years of experience in a highly competitive labor market, and having learned the value of watching operation costs, he has become increasingly exacting in his requirements. He can be satisfied now with nothing less than a sound, mature approach to his labor problems. In many cases this means a careful study of his management-personnel relationship, and adjustments within it, in addition to the mere placement of additional help.

With the gradual tightening of the farm labor market during the first year of war, some of us advocated the recruitment of underemployed ruralities living in our marginal rural regions and their transportation for placement in the commercial farming areas. 12/ The work started in this pilot project not only resulted in the eventual transfer of thousands of unemployed and underemployed workers into agriculture; it also demonstrated to the United States Employment Service and to private industry the existence of an untapped reservoir of available manpower. Between 1942 and 1945 it is estimated that this reservoir contributed from 2 to 4 million workers to agriculture and industry.

The magnitude of the population shift which took place during the war is clearly indicated by Bureau of Census data which show that the rural non-farm and rural farm populations in the age group 14 to 44 shrank by a total of 5,705,000 in the years 1940 and 1944 13/ And the real avalanche in this movement occurred between 1942 and 1944. Unfortunately we do not have comparable data for 1945, but again the Bureau of the Census offers an estimate that

11. Sherman E. Johnson, op. cit., p. 46

12. See The Report of Employment and Under-Employment in the Cut-Over Region of Wisconsin, by George W. Hill, Glen T. Barton and Gilbert Sanborn, processed, June 1, 1942; Also Labor Recruitment in the Wisconsin Cut-Over Region, by the same authors, processed June 30, 1942, for an account of a farm labor research project initiated under the joint sponsorship of the Agricultural Experiment Station, University of Wisconsin and Bureau of Agricultural Economics, which finally culminated in an active farm labor recruitment and placement program under the leadership of the Agricultural Extension Service, University of Wisconsin.

13. Computed from Preliminary Release, Series RS. No. 4, Bureau of the Census.

660,000 rural non-farm families migrated between 1945 and 1946, and that 350,000 rural farm families migrated in this same period. ^{14/} It is obvious, therefore, that the population shifts which began during the war still continue.

Job opportunities, unequaled since World War I were the stimuli which produced the heaviest internal migration that our Nation has ever witnessed. For many ruralities World War II gave them the first real employment in their lives, for others it provided full pay envelopes in contrast to their former meager earnings from intermittent agricultural employment on WPA earnings. Now possibilities of living were opened to them and only pure wishful thinking could ever cause one to believe that this large mass of workers, once available to agriculture, will return en masse to their former rural abodes and that any will voluntarily accept their former precarious standards of living.

For just a moment, let's look at what we once regarded as pretty stable rural farm and rural non-farm population, from another viewpoint. Between the two census dates 1930 and 1940, the states in the East North Central Division (Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois and Wisconsin) lost by migration 51,241 farm boys who should have been in the 20-24 year age farm work force in 1940. This represented a loss of 19.2 percent. The loss in the same age group for the West North Central States, (Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Kansas) was even greater — 80,539 or 27 percent. In the same period the loss of farm girls of this age was 94,719 (38.2 percent) in the East North Central States and 114,169 (40.9 percent) in the West North Central States. In total, the two divisions lost 340,667 20-to-24 year-olds from their potential farm labor force.

Girls, as you have noted, migrate earlier and in larger numbers than do boys, but both groups are fast being lost to agriculture. While migration is heaviest from the low-income farm areas, the migration likewise is heavy from the high income farm areas.

Coupled with this off-farm migration of youth is the lowering birth rate of farm families. Again taking census data from 1940, and tracing fertility patterns back to 1930 and 1920, it is apparent that if the commercial farmers, i.e. those farming in the upper quartile counties in the Midwest corn and hog and dairy belts, have to depend on their own offspring to replace them, many of their farms will have to be sold at auction because there will be no son to replace many present owners in the next generation. Farm families used to be large and we even yet mistakenly refer to the farm as the seedbed of the Nation's population. This generalization is not true; only farmers in the lower half, on an economic classification, will have enough children to provide any real surplus to cities. ^{15/}

14. Preliminary Release, Series P.S. No. 14, Bureau of the Census.

15. Whereas the index of net reproduction (an index of one being necessary to assure biological replacement) among farm families in the lower economic quartile of counties in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois was 1.61, 1.41, 1.37 and 1.35 respectively in 1930, it was 1.51, 1.37, 1.26 and 1.25 respectively in 1940. Among farmers in the upper quartile counties, the real commercial farms of these states, the figures were 1.42, 1.33, 1.34 and 1.28 respectively for Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois in 1930, and 1.30, 1.24, 1.21 and 1.08 for these same states in 1940. For a complete discussion of farm family fertility see George W. Hill and Douglas G. Marshall, "Reproduction and Replacement of Farm Population and Agricultural Policy," to appear in the Journal of Farm Economics, May, 1947.

These factors — migration of families, loss of youth, and the continually decreasing birth rate — have brought about a revolutionary change in our farm population. While demographic changes of this type continue to be dynamic, their basic patterns are permanent and we must proceed with the construction of a farm labor program with these facts in mind. With our potential farm labor force decreasing year by year it is necessary that we pay greater attention to the operations end of the program in order that we may achieve not only the capacity production we need this year but insure the production future years will require.

The onward march of mechanization is another phenomenon that needs close analysis if we are to appreciate its significance for a peacetime manpower policy. Practically all of the discussion current on the subject is in terms of labor displacement. I don't think the facts necessarily support such a view, and I further suggest that only as you can induce further mechanization and a lightening of the heavy labor tasks will you make much progress toward the effective social integration of our total rural human resources.

I have pondered over the dispersion of mechanical techniques and I cannot recall any recent gadget or machine that has not been introduced into the agriculture of the East North Central and West North Central States as a replacement for the agricultural labor (both hired and family help) that had disappeared from the labor force. I do not know of any machine that has displaced our Midwest farm laborer. As example let me cite the buckler, the pick-up mechanism attached to the older combine and the new small combines used in the wheat harvest — all of these have been inventions of necessity to overcome deficits in manpower. The increasing use of the milking machine, haying equipment, and the other mechanical aids around the dairy farm have all come in to take the place of the extra hired man who has been so hard to obtain. ^{16/} Multiple row corn cultivators and corn pickers have also been introduced and are being increased in use because of manpower shortages.

Currently the cotton picking machine is being talked of as the supreme example of mechanization that will displace hordes of workers. I wonder how much displacement there will be and how much replacement? We know, for example, that during the brief 5 year span from April 1935 to April 1940 the South suffered a net loss of 106,610 negroes to the North and West; 142,119 negroes departed, 35,509 entered the region, leaving the net as stated. 65 percent of the Negro male migrants who left the region and 64 percent of the females came from rural areas. Conversely less than half those returning to the Southern Region returned to the rural areas of the South. In addition to this out-migration, 85,689

16. Apparently some agricultural scientists confuse the actual process of technological diffusion, which any extension worker can say is a gradual evolutionary change in the adoption of new ideas by farm folk, with the historical account of the change itself. Viewed in the abstract and in historical retrospect, there appears to have been displacement.

Negro males and 103,753 Negro females migrated from the rural areas of the South to urban centers in the same region. 17/

These statistics are for the 5 years before the war. We have no comparable data for the period from 1940 to date, so I must await the data of the next census to prove whether my impressions are correct that wartime Negro migration is even heavier than that which prevailed during 1935 and 1940. Never before in history has the Negro been offered so many choices of employment as in the past six years. As long as he has these alternatives, he will need replacement in the cotton fields. He was partly replaced by prisoners of war in 1943, 1944, and 1945, and I understand by some foreign workers and Spanish Americans in 1946. He will continue to be replaced -- not displaced -- by the cotton picking machine so long as he has alternative employment opportunities.

Naturally, if a thousand cotton picking machines had been introduced into the fields during the harvest of 1946, displacement would have occurred. Technological diffusion does not, however, happen overnight. It is a gradual process and results in a minimum of social disorganization, except where historical barriers may have existed to thwart the forward moving processes of social change. 18/

Mechanization has also been and will continue to be a necessary corollary to farm consolidation. In this case the increased use of machines is necessary to replace the retiring operators.

Summing up the trends which have been sketched herein, there is no reason to think that a program developed for war years will meet peacetime conditions. Neither can we be so naive as to think that the faucet of foreign workers can be turned off and the faucet controlling native workers be turned on. Nor can we expect that foreign workers need to be recruited and transported along the same routes as those which they have traveled. 19/

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17. Preston Valien, Southern Negro Internal Migration Between 1935 and 1940: Its Direction, Distance and Demographic Characteristics, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Wisconsin, January 1947.
 18. The episode dramatized in Grapes of Wrath is a good example of blocking of the normal processes of cultural change, in this case by the institutional pattern of share cropping.
 19. In attempting to forecast some of the probable trends which will be discussed at this point, the writer has had the opportunity of exchanging views with men who have been or who are now associated with the farm labor program. Chief among these have been Robert Polson, formerly State Supervisor of the Extension Service in New York; R. W. Roskelley, formerly Assistant Supervisor with the Extension Service in Colorado; Arlie Mucks and L. G. Sorden, Supervisor and Assistant Supervisor, respectively with the Extension Service, Wisconsin; and W. C. Holley, who is with the Labor Branch of the Production and Marketing Administration, Washington, D. C. While they have given of their experience, the comments or recommendations are the writer's and he alone is responsible for their statement.

With farm wages continuing at their high level, and there is no reason to believe they will be otherwise, there might be a tendency for inter-regional spontaneous migration of workers to form a larger proportion of the work force than was true of the war years, notwithstanding the demographic shifts which have been outlined. We believe this will be the case because of wartime migration experiences of our people. Reliable information of job opportunities combined with previous experience with adjustment to living conditions away from the home community will produce a more ready response from the potential migrant than was the case in earlier years. To facilitate these movements and to utilize fully this potential manpower, this migration will need more direction (not subsidization) than in the past. While we have historically relied on the automatic operation of this migration, we need a greater coordination between the area of labor need and areas of potential supply of workers to achieve what the Beveridge plan of full employment calls "organized mobility." That means preventing or discouraging needless movement as well as promoting movement where it is needed. It means diminishing aimless movement in chase of jobs which are not there." 20/

With automobile transportation more feasible in the coming years than in the past, more family units should enter the stream of migrants. With more family units requiring stop-over facilities, consideration should be given to the establishment of supervised stop-over camping centers located at strategic points along the main migratory routes. Such centers should offer adequate sanitary, eating, and sleeping facilities so that families who prefer to follow the itinerant trail can do so safely and honorably.

Since the only safe assumption from the farmers' point of view is that of national full employment in the foreseeable future, we need to develop the future program within this framework. More attention than ever needs to be paid, therefore, to the efficiency of the worker output. And here I wish to emphasize the responsibilities of the employer. Farmers and farmer associations who are not willing to do their full share in job training, in providing adequate, sanitary and pleasant living accommodations, should be read out of any cooperative program by the agency responsible for administration on the local level. As I have said before, there need be little worry about the attractiveness of wages, but the other factors enumerated will have a direct bearing on worker output. Unpleasant working conditions have always created more discontent than low wages. You who will have a part in the peacetime program, and the farmers who will cooperate, need to bend all efforts toward a full qualitative use of the available labor. Emphasis on the quantitative aspect of placement will have less bearing than in previous years.

20. Quoted by Margaret Jarman Hagood and Louis J. Ducoff, op. cit., p. 565

Farm employers will do well to profit from the experience of industrial employers recruiting in a tight labor market. We noted early in this discussion that industry will experience difficulty recruiting workers "for jobs requiring unpleasant or heavy physical work." Farm operators can eliminate much of the unpleasant or heavy physical work by seeing to it that machinery is used to the fullest to make the necessary hand tasks in planting, cultivating and harvesting as pleasant, as easy, and profitable as it is possible to make them. To cite a case in point; clean, persistent and efficient cultivation and cross blocking of sugar beets will go a long way toward solving the labor difficulties which persistently obtain in this crop. I have seen Mexican nationals attempting hoeing operations in fields where they literally were forced to hunt on hands and knees for the beet plants. Too often weather was used as an alibi in these instances by a farmer who did not know the sporting elements of fair play. You cannot afford the luxury of attempting to cooperate with employers of this type.

In the matter of housing, there are two factors which need to be considered and which have not been discussed. First, there is the matter of liquidating federal or state investments which are rapidly deteriorating in value and which in many cases should be the responsibility of the one or two large employers of labor who derive chief benefits from such ventures. Transfer of such responsibility would be in accord with the wartime relaxing of centralized controls in favor of free enterprise. And in order to have public acceptance of a peacetime program its general pattern should attempt to conform to basic trends in public opinion.

Secondly, greater efforts should be put forth to place responsibility for the regulation of health, safety, sanitary and housing standards upon state regulatory agencies. The recent legislative actions of the state of New York are admirable examples of the creation of authorities and agencies in these fields. Such transfer of regulatory authority should not, however, in any way release you from educational responsibilities in these matters.

Under the emergency of wartime employment the enforcement of child labor laws was relaxed. These laws will not only be revived, but recent action by the legislative bodies in Georgia, Massachusetts, California and New York indicate more stringent child labor legislation in the future.

If my prediction of more family units entering the migrant stream holds true, then more attention than in the past needs to be given to the educational problems of migrant family children in the areas of employment. Michigan has taken some steps to solve this problem. Only casual observation, however, will reveal how little has been done in the field. This is an area of activity where the Extension Service could exert a great degree of influence in the organization of formal and informal educational facilities.

This naturally leads me to some final considerations. War is a great levelling force, and under its influence traditions give way. I have noted with interest the numerous memorials and resolutions passed by well-meaning pressure groups concerning the future of the farm labor program. Many Extension Directors have expressed the view that they wish to get out of this responsibility

and return to matters more germane to extension teaching. I think I fully appreciate their viewpoint, but underlying this attitude is an assumption that runs counter to fact. This assumption is that farmers can return to their traditional individual hiring practices.

The demographic shifts which I have outlined will not permit this return to the good old days. The labor reserve that used to lie in wait for the seasonal demands in our hamlets and farm villages is no longer there. The rising cost of living and the attractions of urban life have pulled these people away who until comparatively recently, were content with a way of life where minimum basic necessities could be supplied by the remuneration from intermittent work.

The farmer has become too much of an industrialist, comparatively speaking, to be able to revert to his previous catch-as-catch-can labor methods. He has much more at stake than previously, hence his demands will likewise be more exacting. His highly coordinated and varied activities will require a dependable labor service.

Labor, likewise has undergone a change during the war years, and its modern attitude toward the employer and the job must be taken into account. To get the worker to recognize and to accept his full share of responsibility in the management-personnel team, you in the peacetime program will have to give a larger part of your attention to his operations and functions than you have done in the past and not be concerned merely with his placement.

There are those who believe that now that the war emergency is past the problem of supplying labor to our farmers should be turned over to the USES. Those who advocate such a policy are blind to the ongoing processes of cultural change which I have attempted to outline. If, in rural America, our task was simply one of matching job applicants with job openings, then the USES might be expected to perform the service. But the task of the future will not be as simple as this.

Now, as never before, we are going into an era when the task becomes an educational one. This was the chief reason for my earlier suggestion that regulatory functions be transferred to appropriate agencies, only then can the real core of the job be concentrated on. Technological advances will continue, marketing problems, both local and inter-national, will likewise continue to shape the course of the farm organization. We have conquered the problems of production, which once were our chief goals, but we need to remain constantly alert so that the organization that has been created stays in balance. Labor will continue to remain of central importance, but with the ever increasing complexity of the farm organization its importance will be a matter of management-personnel relations. Neither farm operators nor farm laborers can be expected to go through the changing social process without guidance, and the Extension Service cannot afford to be other than in the center of the social movement.

Foreign labor battalions and their effective routing will undoubtedly be necessary for some time to come. But, as in the case of housing, consideration should be given to developing an equitable adjustment in transportation and other costs between the government and the users of this labor. To

arrive at such an adjustment will necessitate changes in the basic agreements which make the recruitment of foreign nations possible. 21/

All of this means that the Department of Agriculture needs to incorporate into its thinking, permanent, rather than emergency responsibility for farm labor. It needs to carry over from the war, learned experiences, at the same time that it faces the future as a new situation. The mistake should not be made of attempting only to modify and alter the existing program. New situations demand new treatments. How this shall be most effectively accomplished on national and state levels, leads me to my final point, namely that such patterns can only be intelligently designed as they are based on facts. These facts are only revealed by research.

Congress wrote emergency legislation on a farm problem which has proven its worth as have few emergency legislative attempts. It would seem to me that the Congress would be willing now to authorize the expenditure of a portion of the annual farm labor appropriation for basic research study so that it could write permanent legislation. To meet the changing peacetime conditions we need to delve deeply into the trends which my few weeks of preparation for this assignment have permitted me to sketch in dim outline only. The problem needs to be studied in all of the major labor using areas, and in all of the potential labor supply areas. If we in agriculture are to do our share to help our Nation maintain full employment, and only on its achievement can we all prosper, then we need to know "the human factors in production and consumption (which) are the keynotes of the full employment goal." 22/ We need facts so that a harmonious balance can be maintained between those who are willing and able to work and those who have the work that needs to be done.

21. It should also be possible for certain very large users of hand labor to be assisted in their private recruitment campaigns, irrespective of whether native or foreign labor is employed.

22. Margaret Jarman Hagood and Louis J. Duceff, op. cit., p. 560